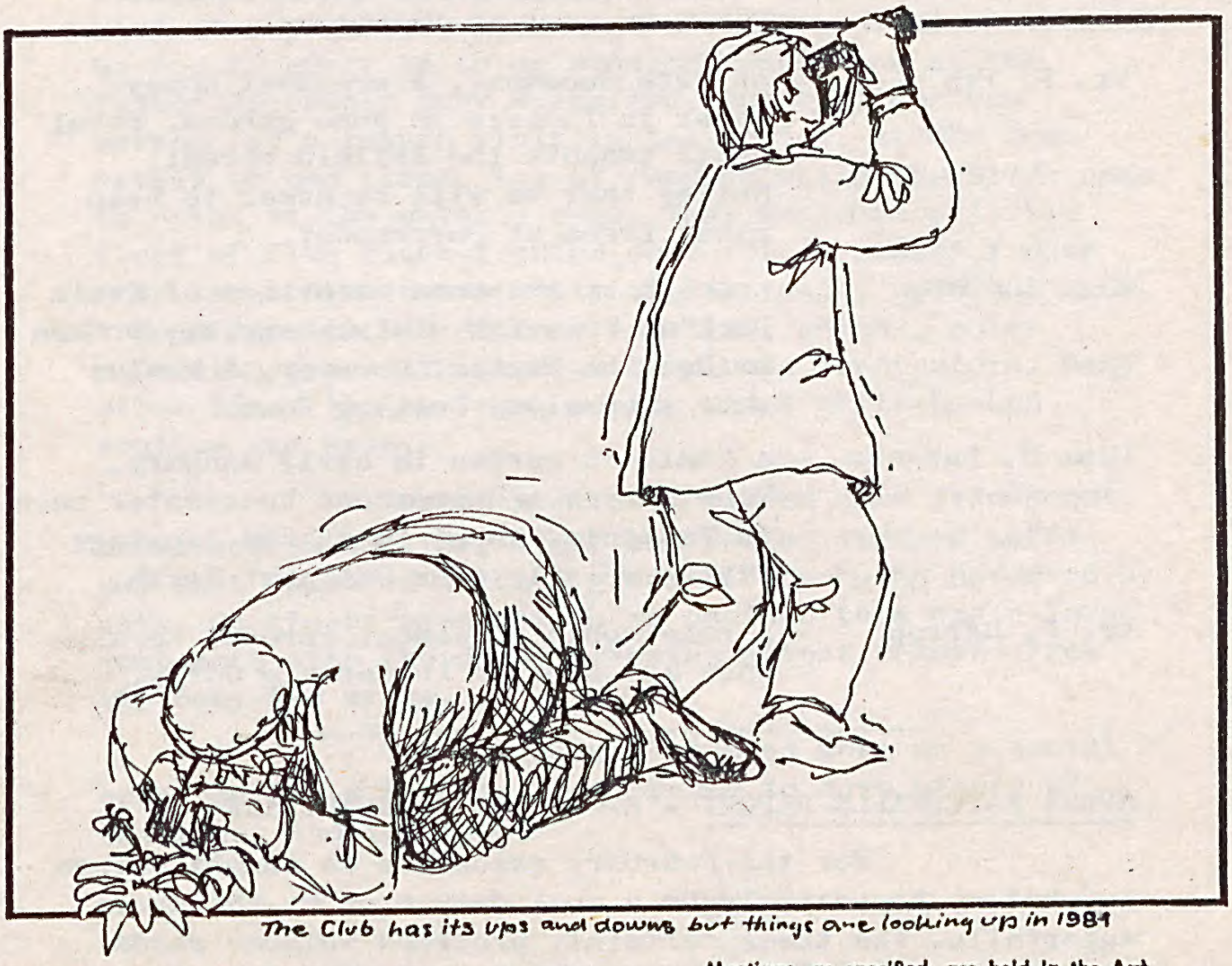
Field Naturalists Club of Ballarat

MARCH, 1984

EXCURSION - NEWS SHEET

Meeting :	2nd March - Annual Meeting, Members Night	
Meeting	13th April -	"Bats" Speaker: Dr. W. Holsworth
Excursion	4th March -	Enfield Leader: Mr. P. Fry. Half Day.
Excursion	15th April -	The You Yangs Leader: Mr. L. Fink. Full Day.



The Club has its ups and downs but things are looking up in 1984

President: Dr F. HARRAP Phone 301651
Vice-pres: Mr W. MURPHY Phone 323289
Secretary: Miss H. BURGESS Phone 312210
Treasurer: Mrs F. WILLIAMSON Phone 327631
Editor: Mrs P. MURPHY Phone 323289

Meetings, as specified, are held in the Art Building of the School of Mines and Industries, Lydiard Street South, Ballarat, commencing 7.30pm.

EXCURSIONS, AS SPECIFIED, COMMENCE FROM CROCKERS, Cnr. STURT and ARMSTRONG STREETS, BALLARAT. AT 9.30 am FOR FULL DAY OUTINGS, OR AT 1.30 pm FOR HALF DAY.

REPORTS: February Meeting.

Mr. G. Binns	- Wild Dog Creek near Skenes Creek- platypus; beach nearby - hooded dotterels; king parrots in Otways. Some 6-spined spiders in a jar on observation table.
Mr. L. Fink	- reports of starlings on Macquarie Island, probably flown from New Zealand. Feral goats in Brisbane Ranges - 30 seen near Moorabool River.
Mrs . G. Manguss	- blue-tongued lizard on Pryor Street.
Mr. R. Thomas	- correa specimens on observation table and members asked to smell leaves. Elbow Orchids at Barkstead.
Mr. P. Fry	- on 12th December, a crescent honey-eater in fuchsia in home garden. Feral goats inhabit the Enfield Forest. Notice that we will be asked to help plant trees at Burrumbeet.
Mrs. B. Gray	- concern at run-down condition of Koala Park at Creswick - blackberries, broken bridge, no koalas. However, 8 koalas were seen along Geelong Road.
Miss H. Burgess	- a koala in garden in early January. Pink robins and crescent honeyeater seen in Tasmania. About 30 masked lapwings flying noisily over Ballarat North.
Dr. F. Harrap	- a rose robin in Wombat Forest. Feral dogs and pups in Lerderderg Gorge.

AVOCA WATERFALLS REPORT - EXCURSION FEBRUARY 1984.

For the February excursion we sought refuge in what we hoped would be a cool damp area by the Avoca waterfalls. The trees certainly provided welcome shade on a hot afternoon,but the dry stone creek bed leading up to the falls was an indication of what was to come-

the stream had dwindled to a pencil thin trickle! Nevertheless, the vegetation was greener than in the dry bushland elsewhere. Maidenhair fern was growing beside the path and a number of wildflowers were in bloom. The most spectacular of these were stands of tall-stemmed Lobelia gibbosa with their azure fleur-de-lis shaped flowers; also the magenta flowered Storksbill, Twining Glycine and Clustered Everlasting. Mistletoe was very prevalent. One tree on the road from the vineyards seemed to have been entirely consumed by it. Sadly our hopes of seeing mistletoe birds were unrealised, but fuscous, white-naped and white-plumed honeyeaters were seen, also the flame robin.

With Harvey Hooper's expert navigating skills, we made our way across country through the Lillicur Forest to Caralulup, where we made a brief stop at a promising bird area noted the previous weekend. We had to hurry on to an evening rendezvous at the Talbot Reservoir near Evansford, but Lillicur was marked for a return visit in the Spring. At the Reservoir we had picnic tea at sundown while the birds came to drink at the water's edge. They included a little flock of five black-fronted dotterel, a peaceful dove near the southern extremity of its range, numerous red-rumped parrots and eastern rosellas, galahs, noisy miners, magpie-larks and white-plumed honeyeaters. Many other birds in the trees nearby and a white-backed swallow was seen.

Insect species included some iridescent brown scarab beetles, black and yellow striped moths and what appeared to be a giant cicado being devoured by ants. On closer examination we decided this was a large goat-moth with the downy covering almost removed from its body and wings.

The outing was planned more as a social occasion for a hot day, but proved to have plenty of enjoyment and interest.

M. Rotheram.

REMEMBER:

V.F.N.C.A. LABOUR DAY ANNUAL GET-TOGETHER.

March 10-12th, 1984 at Creswick.

Venue: St. Pauls Hall,
Napier St.,
Creswick.

Programme includes excursions of historical and geological interest.

BOOK REVIEWS.

1. "Eucalypts of the Bendigo District" by Don Franklin, John Lindner and John Robinson.

Published in December 1983, this is the Bendigo Field Naturalist Club's first publication. The authors, with Graham Hill who designed the cover and prepared the map, and the printers, D.G.Walker Pty.Ltd., have combined to produce a most attractive and professionally presented publication. Special thanks are due to Leon Costermans, author of "Native Trees and Shrubs of South-eastern Australia", and his publishers (Rigby Publishers Ltd.), for permission to use the relevant illustrations from his book. Thanks are due to the many people who provided information and/or comment on the manuscript, each of whom contributed in some way to refining the accuracy of the text. The result has been a scientifically worthwhile addition to Victoria's botanical literature, which will enable users to identify the eucalypts of the Bendigo region.

(From "Whirrakee" the monthly Newsletter of the Bendigo Field Naturalists Club)

Anyone interested in ordering the above mentioned book may contact our Secretary, Helen Burgess.
The price of the book is $2.50

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2. "The Atlas of Australian Birds" by Margaret Blakers, Stephen Davies and Pauline Reilly.

This book will be published in June 1984, the culmination of seven years work by the three authors. They were helped in their efforts by many hundreds of bird-watchers and fieldworkers in Australia and overseas.

The book displays the distribution of the various bird species throughout Australia - both those that breed here and those which are regular visitors. Every species has a large two -colour map of its own and information is given about its range in Australia and overseas, the isolation of its populations, the pattern of movements that it shows,where to find it, and the factors that appear to control its distribution and abundance. Where densities have been measured in the field, these are given to provide comparison with the reporting rates shown on the maps. Over 1900 references provide students with an entry into the current literature about Australia's birds.

The price of the Atlas of Australian Birds is $39.00 plus postage ($2.05). This price is a pre-publication offer until 16th April, 1984, after which time the normal retail price will be $49.00. Orders and payment may be sent to:

The Royal Australasian Ornithologists Union,
21 Gladstone Street,
MOONEE PONDS, Vic. 3039

POWERFUL OWLS IN THE WOMBAT STATE FOREST

FEBRUARY, 1984

The best area on a hot Saturday in February is, to my mind, the Wombat Forest where we had our excursion in December. On my two last visits I have seen powerful owls, in both cases near where we had our pre-lunch walk.

On February 12th I finally realised why a rufous fantail was fluttering in a tall Blackwood and uttering an unusual continuous note (unusual to me, anyway.) Just previously I had heard a red-browed treecreeper calling incessantly in another Blackwood nearby.

Anyway, high up in this first tree (probably about 20 metres), was an immature powerful owl, all fluffed and with its head turning nervously as it listened to all the agitated birds nearby. I lay in the ferns and watched for nearly 25 minutes. On several occasions the bird leant forward, its talons on one occasion slipping on the branch and it literally had to haul itself back upright before it looped the loop. At long last it apparently had had enough, lifted its wings into a deeply folded "V", shook itself and flew off. I don't think it flew particularly far, but from then on all was silent.

I had thought the previous Saturday that there were owls in the area, because of a pile of crimson rosella feathers about 100 metres from the tree. On the 19th, I found a second pile of rosella feathers.

Also on the 19th about 500 metres down river on the Lerderderg, I surprised an adult owl. The bird flew off without any sound and soon disappeared.

In addition, a crescent honeyeater's hatchling, several sightings of yellow-tailed black cockatoo (unusual for this area), many rufous fantails, an immature rose robin, satin flycatchers, and you have good birding in a delightful area on a hot day.

Frank Harrap

PLEASE NOTE:

The meeting, 2nd March, 1984, and all following meetings, unless otherwise advertised, will be held in the Art Building, at the School of Mines in Lydiard Street South.

The W.V.F.N.C.A. Camp-out at Warrnambool is to be held on 6th to 8th April. Therefore the F.N.C.B. meeting and excursion will be moved forward to the 13th and 15th April.

W.V.F.N.C.A. CAMPOUT : 7 - 8 APRIL, 1984

WARRNAMBOOL

PROGRAMME:

All times to be punctual

Friday Evening	6.30 p.m.	Leave the Information Centre to view the incoming mutton birds at Port Fairy. (Leaders: Vin Yoeman, Mary Griffith)
Saturday Morning	10.00 a.m.	At Scout Hall (Pertobe Road near lawn tennis courts) guided walk around Lake Pertobe (Leaders: Harold Maher, Joan Yoeman)
	or	
	free morning - suggestions:	walk along the beach or Thunder Point, or visit to Flagstaff Hill.
	Lunch	Picnic facilities available at Lake Pertobe
Saturday Afternoon	1.15 p.m.	Leave Information Centre for Ralph Illidge Sanctuary via Hopkins Falls. (Leader: Tom Hyland) Bill Alford to show film on arrival at sanctuary and M. Frazer to give a talk on regeneration of growth since fires.
Saturday Evening	6.30 p.m.	Meeting at Christ Church Hall, Koroit St. Display by S.G.A.P. and short talk by Pat Urbonas
		Dr. John Sherwood "The History, Geelong & Ecology of the Hopkins River"
Sunday Morning	9.30 a.m.	Leave Information Centre (Leaders - Vin Yeoman, Mary Griffith)
		Walk on Killarney Beach

Sunday Lunch at Tower Hill
15 minute talk by Bill Alford on the area of Tower Hill.
Walks and dispersal.

The following accommodation is recommended:

"The Fig Tree" Caravan Park in Lava Street, Warrnambool

"The Jubilee Caravan Park" near Allansford (about 10km from Warrnambool)

The "Elm Tree Lodge Motel" which is next to the Information Centre (where we start the outings).

EDITOR'S THANKS

The decision to take long service leave means that this will be my last news-sheet. Very many thanks must go to my typists, Christine Chapman, Gretl Manguss, Marg Murphy, and Denise Wright, to Lyndsay Fink for the monthly meeting reports, to Graham Hawley for the front cover drawings and to all those club members who contributed the excursion reports and articles.

Best wishes go to the new editor and I ask you all to continue your valuable support with drawings, reports, articles, etc.

Patricia Murphy